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Kubo et al.

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(54) **TRANSMISSION OF OUTBOARD MOTOR**

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B63H 20/14 (2006.01)
B63H 20/32 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B63H 20/14*** (2013.01); ***B63H 20/32*** (2013.01); *B63H 2020/323* (2013.01); *Y10T 74/19284* (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC F16H 3/091; B63H 20/002; B63H 20/14
USPC 440/75; 74/325, 329
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A transmission is structured to include a drive shaft, a counter shaft disposed in parallel with the drive shaft, a gear train bridged between each of a drive shaft input shaft and output shaft and the counter shaft, and a dog clutch mechanism selectively switching a high shift speed and a low shift speed in a transmission chamber. The transmission includes a drive device driving the dog clutch mechanism constituted of a hydraulic drive device driven by a hydraulic cylinder, the hydraulic cylinder being disposed in the transmission chamber.

5 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets

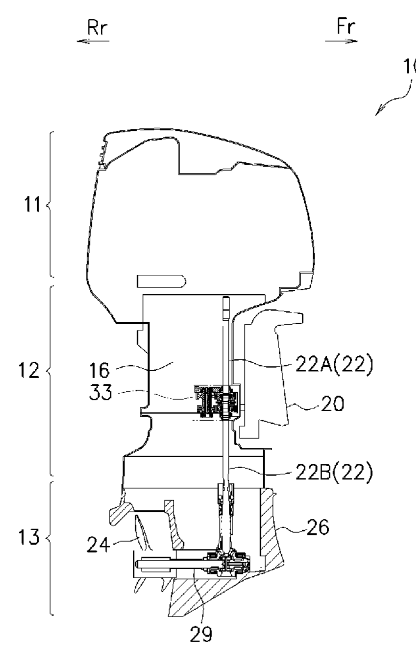
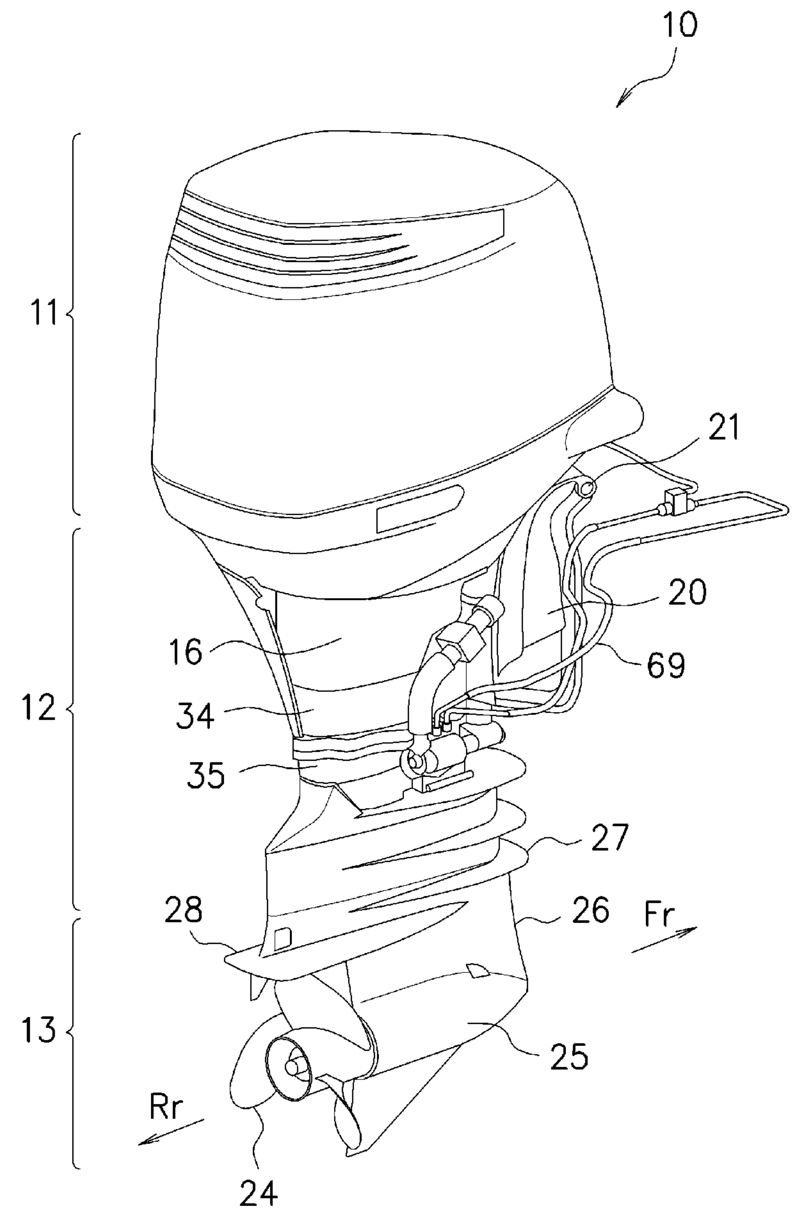
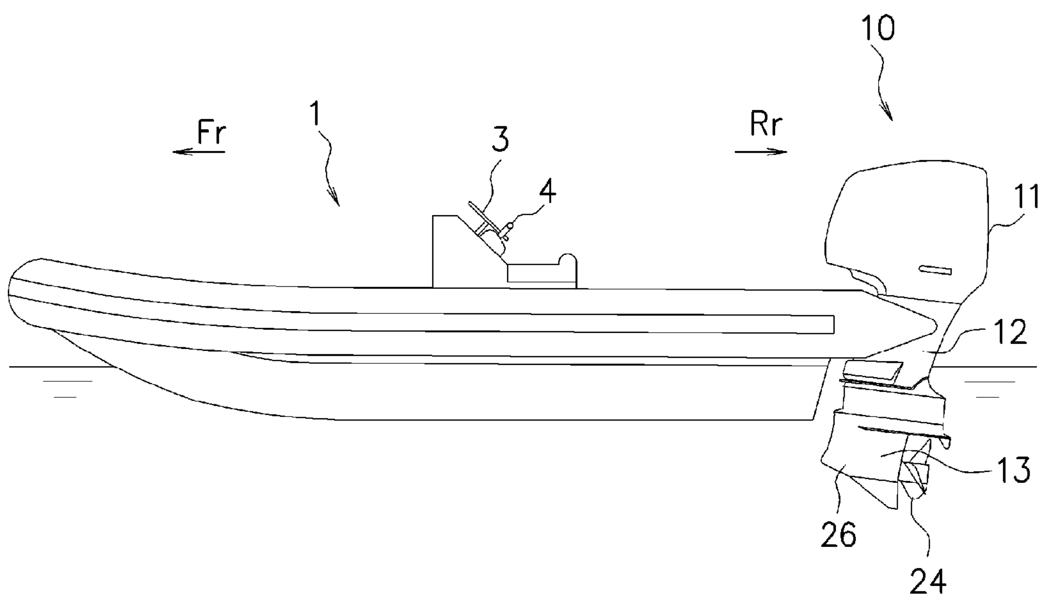


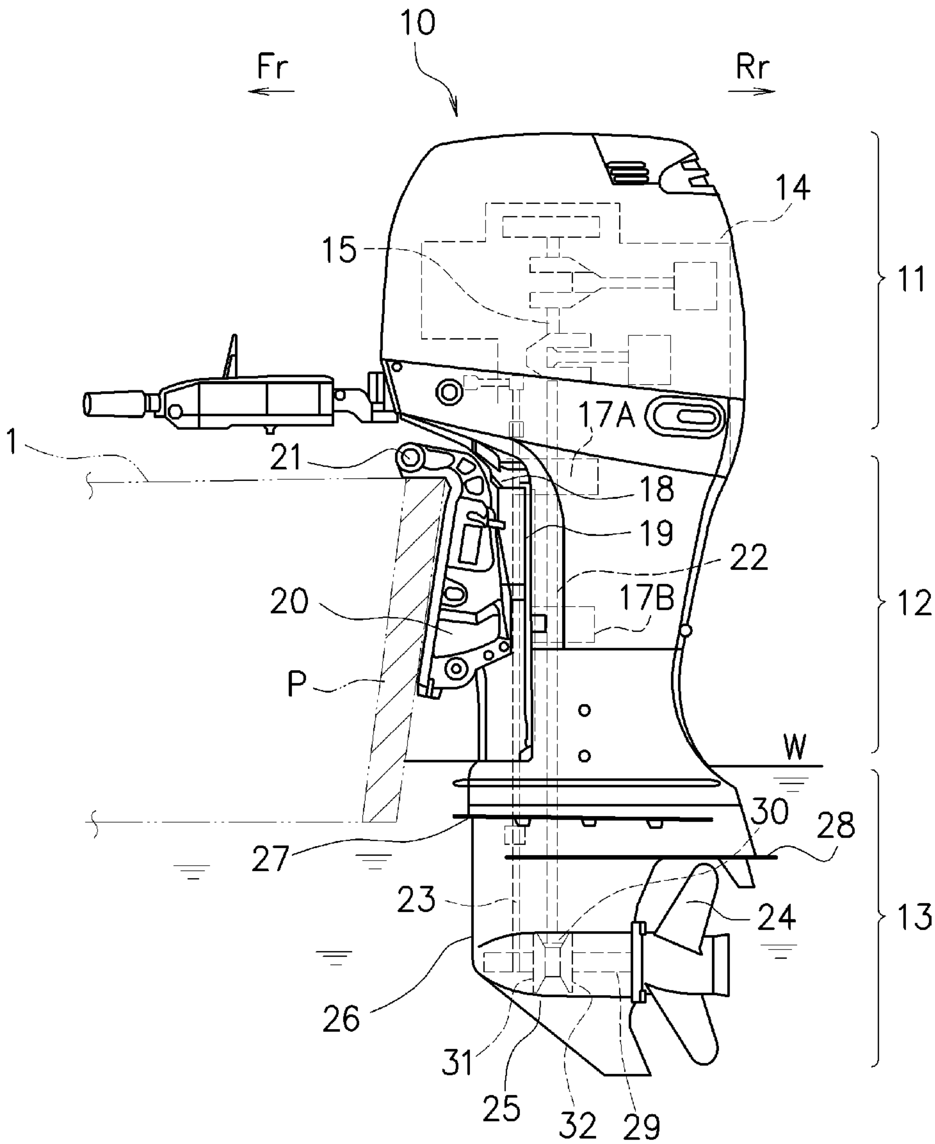
FIG. 1



F I G. 2



F I G. 3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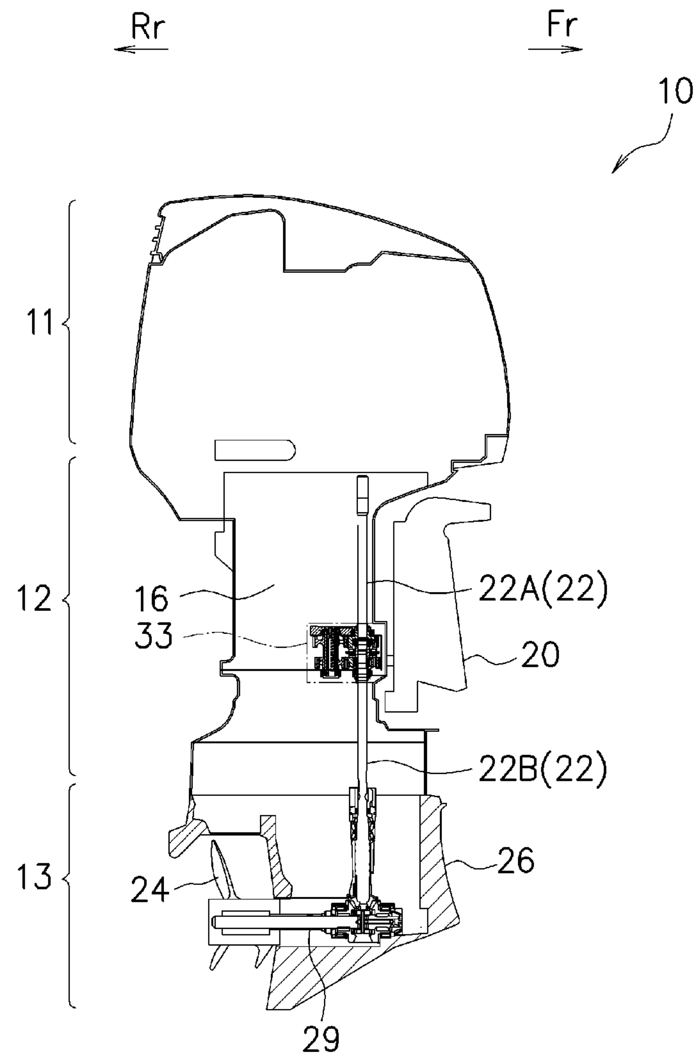
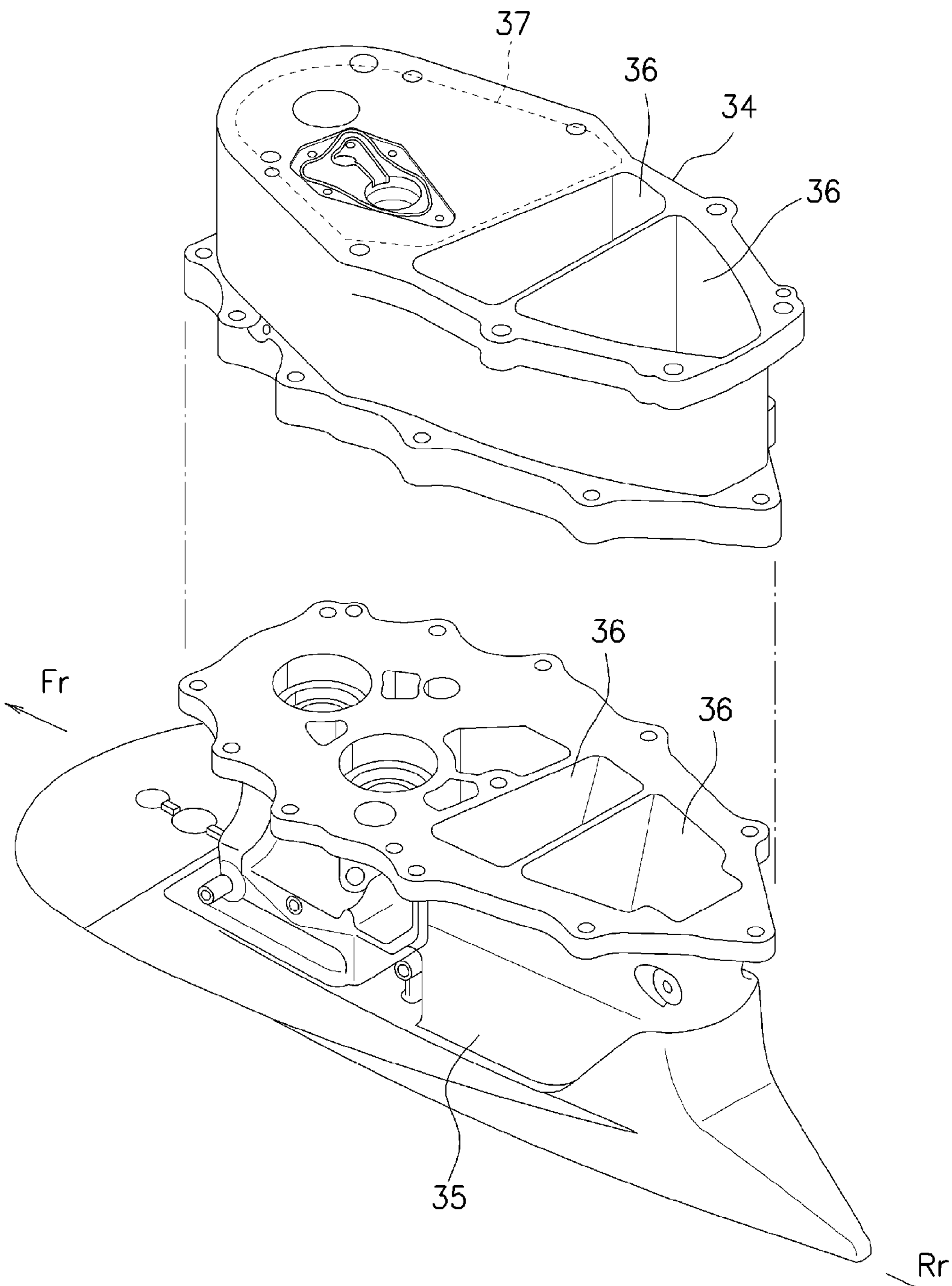
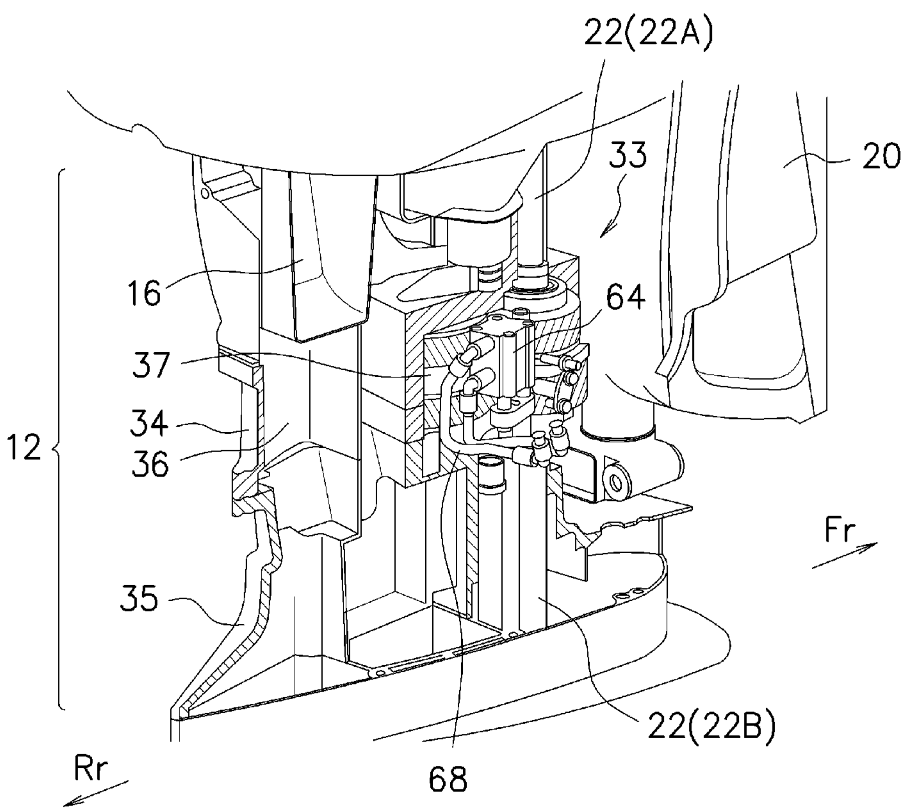
F I G. 4



F I G. 5



F I G. 6



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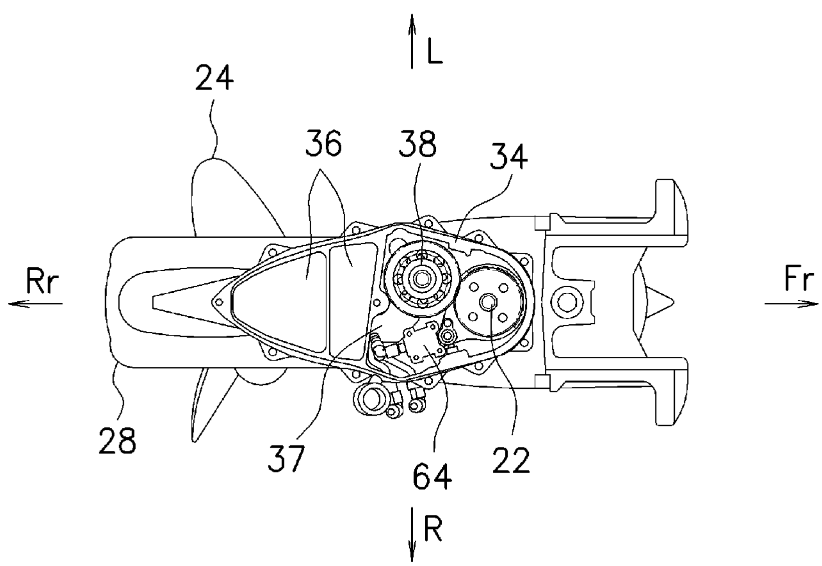


FIG. 8

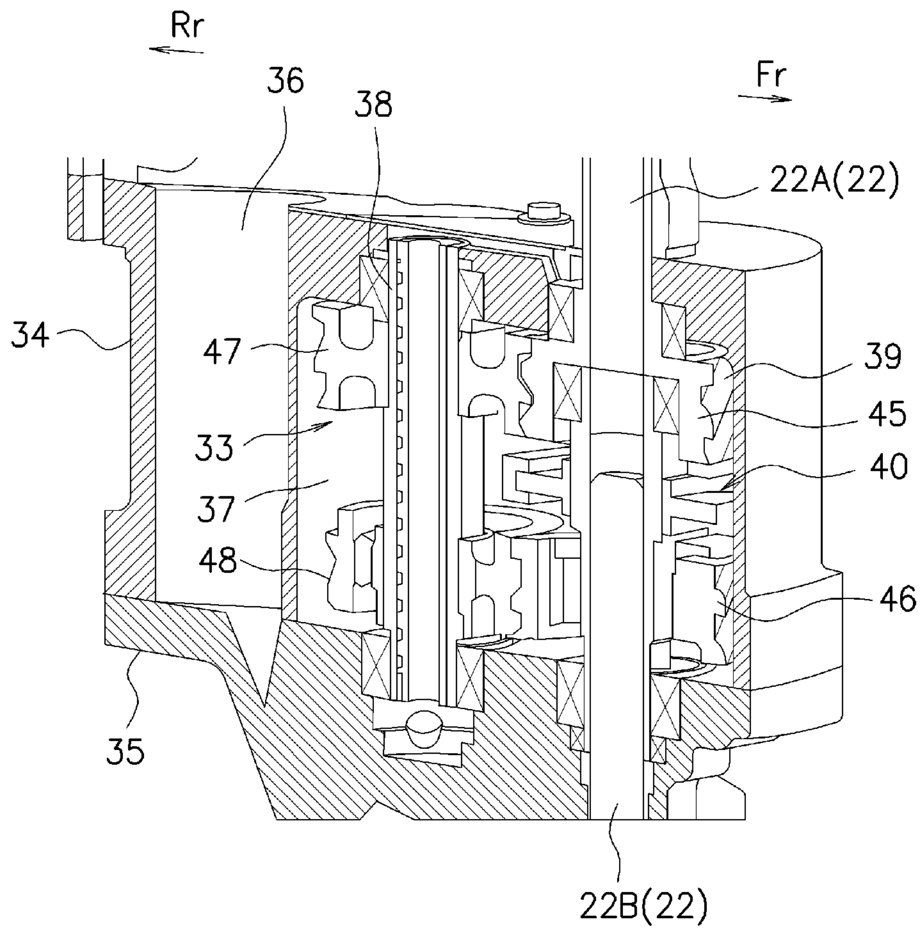
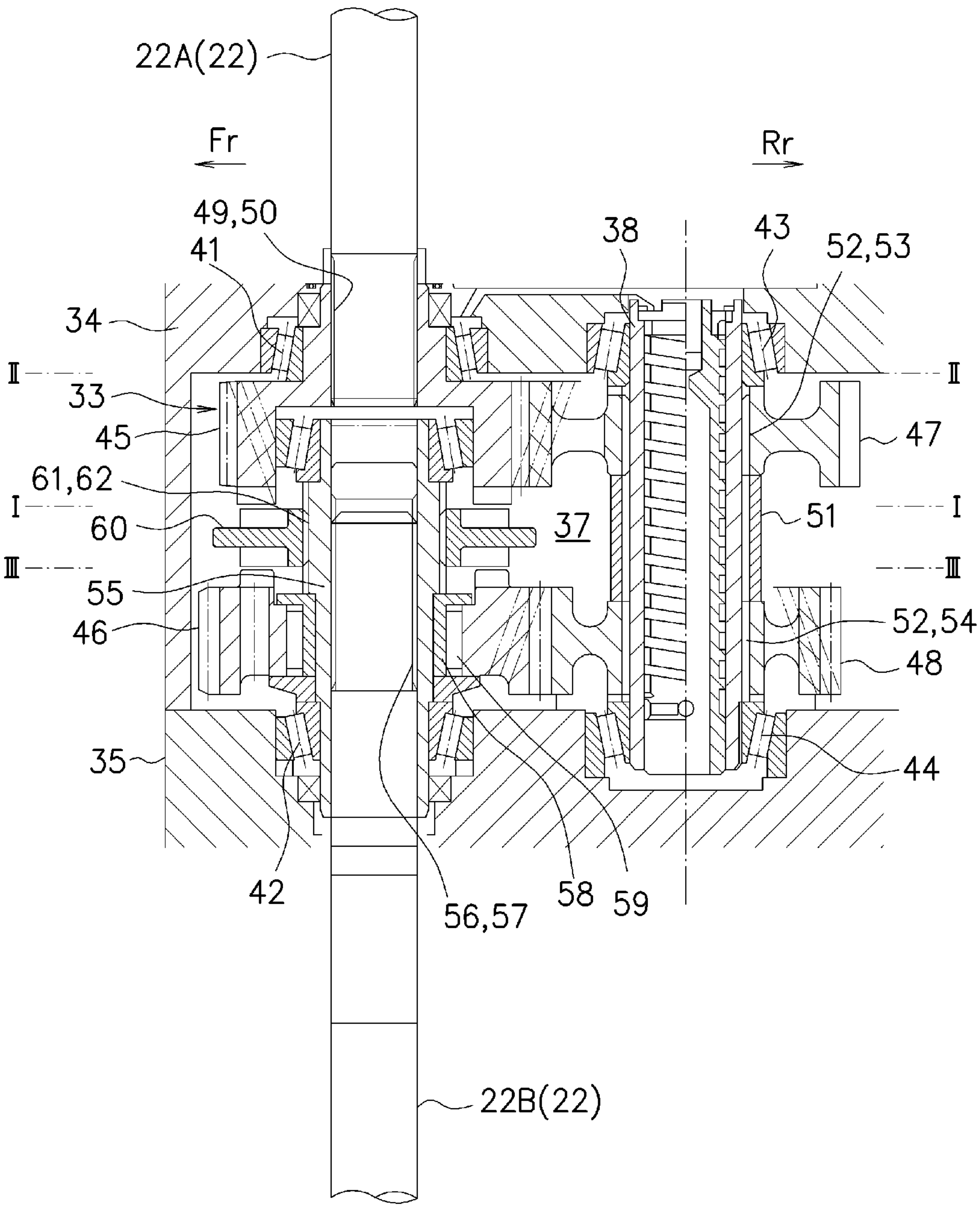


FIG. 9


22A(22)
Fr
Rr
49,50
41
38
43
52,53
34
II
II
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61,62
I
I
60
37
51
III
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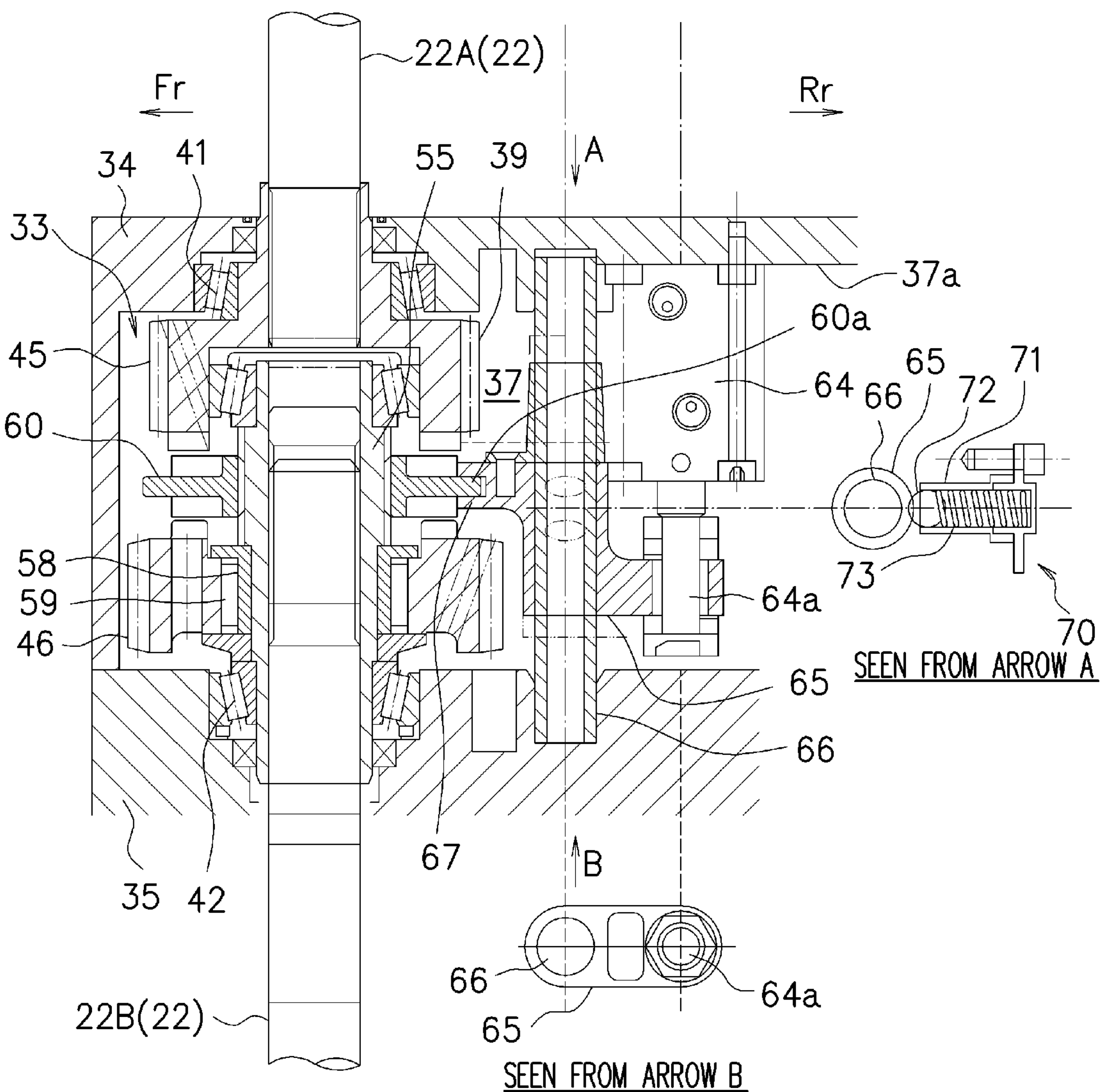
F I G. 10


22A(22)
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Rr
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60a
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73
64a
59
46
70
SEEN FROM ARROW A
65
66
67
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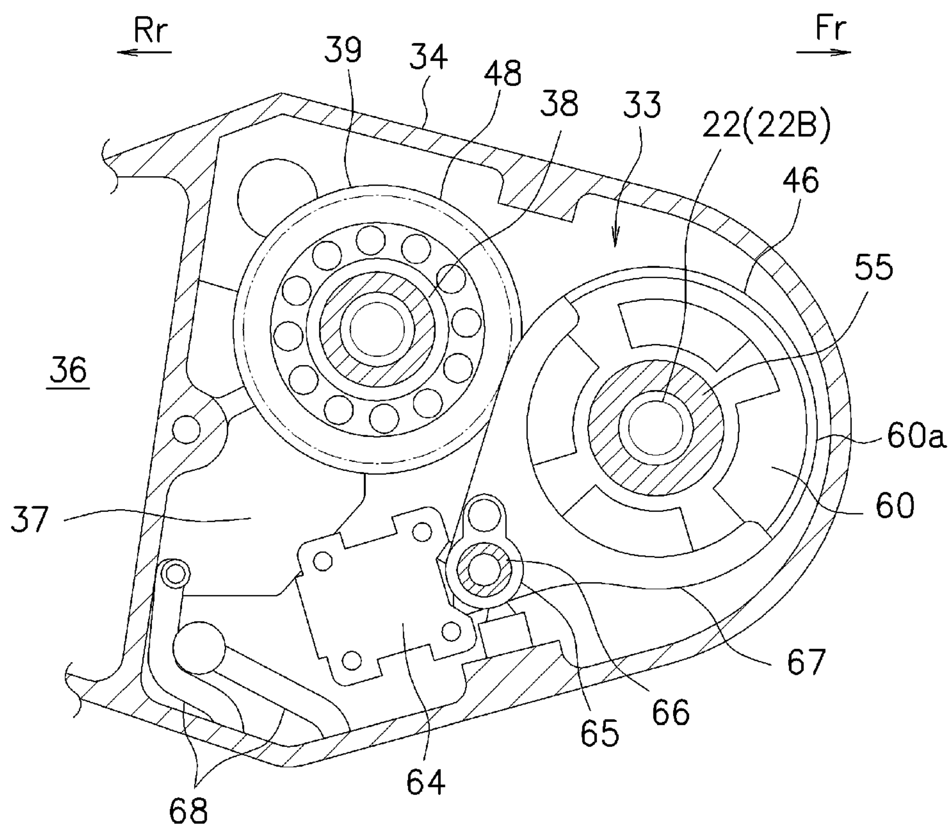
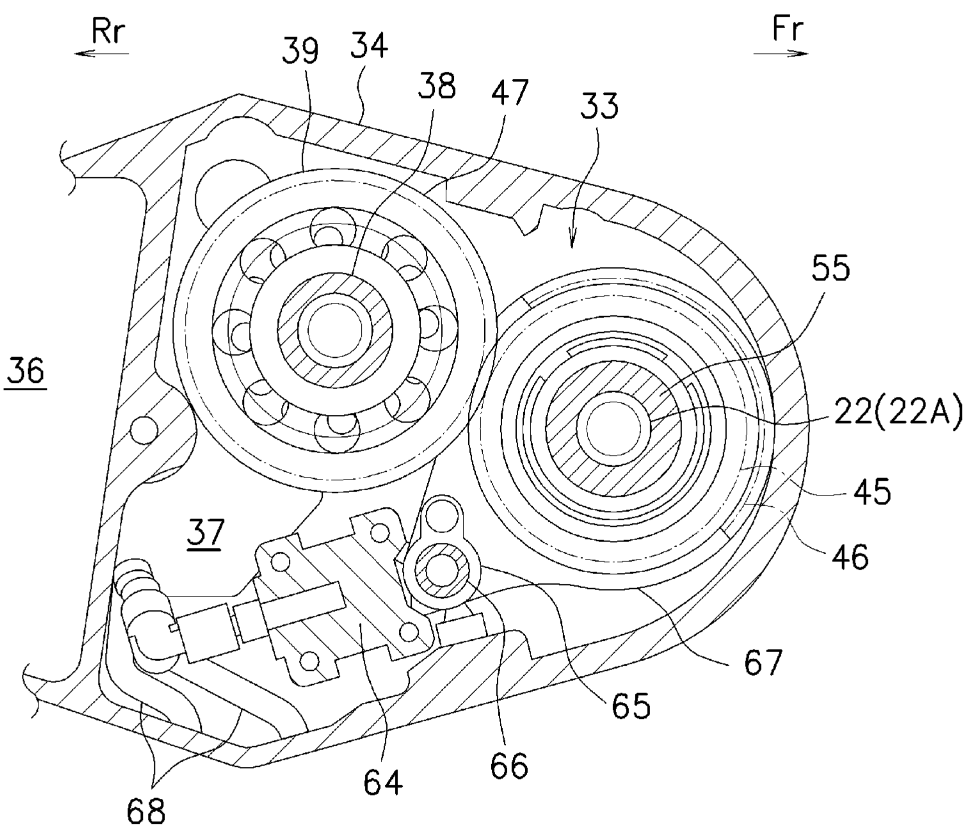
42
B
66
64a
65
22B(22)
SEEN FROM ARROW B

F I G. 11



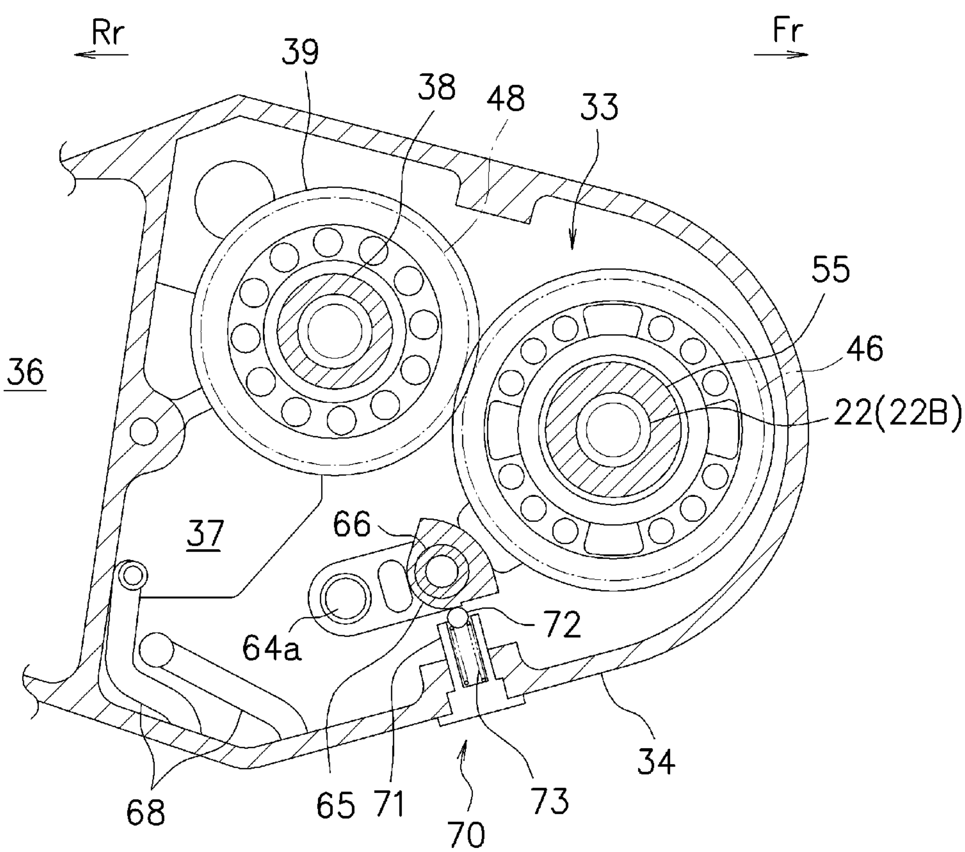
SEC. I-I

F I G. 12

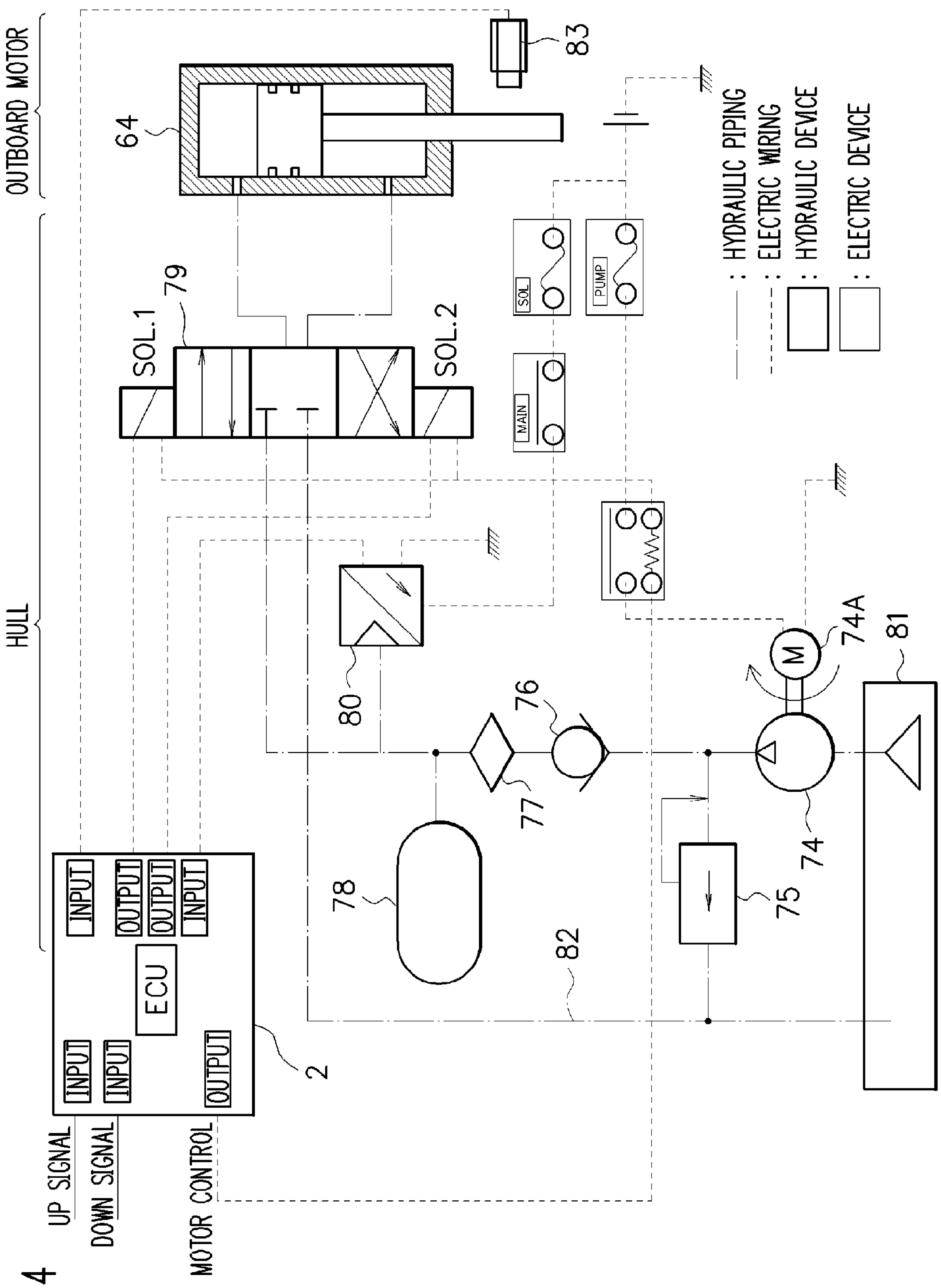


SEC. II-II

F I G. 13



SEC. III-III


OUTBOARD MOTOR
HULL
83
64
79
SOL.1
SOL.2
SOL
PUMP
MAIN
: HYDRAULIC PIPING
: ELECTRIC WIRING
: HYDRAULIC DEVICE
: ELECTRIC DEVICE
80
76
77
M
74A
74
75
81
78
82
INPUT
OUTPUT
OUTPUT
INPUT
ECU
INPUT
INPUT
OUTPUT
2
UP SIGNAL
DOWN SIGNAL
MOTOR CONTROL

F I G. 14

TRANSMISSION OF OUTBOARD MOTOR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is based upon and claims the benefit of priority of the prior Japanese Patent Application No. 2013-144670, filed on Jul. 10, 2013, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a transmission in an outboard motor having a drive shaft which couples an engine in an upper part and a propeller in a lower part.

2. Description of the Related Art

Conventionally, among outboard motors in which an engine as a driving force source disposed in an upper part of an outboard motor body and a propelling device having a propeller disposed in a lower part are coupled to each other via a drive shaft, there are ones in which a transmission is provided in an appropriate middle position of the drive shaft. The transmission is shifted according to the traveling state of a boat having such an outboard motor, to an environment, or the like, so as to improve power performance, fuel consumption performance, and so on of the outboard motor.

Various types are devised as a specific structure for such transmissions. For example, in an outboard motor described in Patent Document 1, an automatic transmission made up of two planetary gears, three multiple wet clutches, and one one-way clutch is provided on a drive shaft coupling an engine and a propelling device (lower unit). According to this example, by setting the position of the transmission to a substantially middle portion in a vertical direction of the outboard motor, an outboard motor with a transmission can be realized compactly without affecting the profile of the entire outboard motor, thereby achieving both acceleration performance and fuel consumption performance.

Moreover, in one described in Patent Document 2, a two-speed transmission is constituted of parallel-axis spur gears which have high power transmission efficiency. Further, there are known one in which a switch point of the transmission is set by using a centrifugal clutch, one in which a transmission case and a water pump case are constituted integrally as in Patent Document 3, and the like.

Further, as in Patent Document 4, there is known one in which a transmission is provided in an intermediate part of a drive shaft, and an input shaft to the transmission and an output shaft from the transmission are coaxial.

Patent Document 1: Japanese Laid-open Patent Publication No. 2009-149202

Patent Document 2: Japanese Examined Patent Application Publication No. 03-14273

Patent Document 3: Japanese Examined Utility Model Application Publication No. 04-27757

Patent Document 4: Japanese Laid-open Patent Publication No. 62-191297

In one of Patent Document 1, the multiple wet clutches need a strong hydraulic device, which is expensive and for which energy needed for operating a hydraulic pump to maintain hydraulic pressure is large, becoming a cause of hindering fuel consumption performance. Further, although the multiple wet clutches couple smoothly, unlike the case of a four-wheeled vehicle, this function is not needed as much as in the case of a four-wheeled vehicle because changes in propeller speed of a propeller which only has small inertial

moment are absorbed in the outboard motor. Accordingly, for the multiple wet clutches, a merit of alleviating shift shock is small with respect to high price, large weight, and large operating energy. Besides this, the planetary gears are expensive, and moreover, they are inferior to parallel-axis spur gears with respect to motive power transmission efficiency, and the like. From these points, it goes without saying that they are not suitable for outboard motors.

Further, a shift change mechanism in one of Patent Document 2 is a mechanical link mechanism, and is not able to suppress a shock transmitted to the link when it is shifted. Then, the position at an intermediate point is tolerated at a time of shift transition, and thus there is a problem of wear due to a relative speed difference. Moreover, it is set to a low speed side at a time of motive power direct coupling or to a high speed side at a time of via counter. Thus, while cruising which largely affects fuel consumption, it is motive power transmission via counter, and the fuel consumption worsens by the amount of gear transmission efficiency.

Moreover, in one of Patent Document 3, a counter shaft is disposed in a front side in a traveling direction, and a counter gear is housed in a gear case of forward tapered type, which is advantageous in terms of hydromechanics. Thus, a large-diameter gear cannot be disposed, causing a strength-related problem. Further, gear shift is performed by the mechanical link mechanism, and hence there is a problem that a shock at a time of speed shift is transmitted as is to the link side, and the like.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of such situations, it is an object of the present invention to provide a transmission of an outboard motor which improves power performance, fuel consumption performance, and the like, while smoothly and appropriately performing shift control.

A transmission of an outboard motor of the present invention is a transmission of an outboard motor in which a crank shaft extending in a vertical direction of an engine mounted on an upper side is coupled to a drive shaft, a gear type transmission capable of switching between at least two high and low speed ratios is interposed between a drive shaft input shaft coupled to the crank shaft and a drive shaft output shaft driving a propeller, which are separated into an upper part and a lower part of the drive shaft, wherein: the transmission is housed in a transmission chamber formed in a drive shaft housing and includes the drive shaft, a counter shaft disposed in parallel with the drive shaft, a gear train bridged between each of the drive shaft input shaft and output shaft and the counter shaft, and a dog clutch mechanism selectively switching a high shift speed and a low shift speed; and the transmission includes a drive device driving the dog clutch mechanism constituted of a hydraulic drive device driven by a hydraulic cylinder, the hydraulic cylinder being disposed in the transmission chamber.

Further, in the transmission of the outboard motor of the present invention, the drive shaft is disposed in a center portion in a left and right direction of a forefront part of the transmission chamber, and the counter shaft and the hydraulic cylinder are offset to left and right, respectively, behind the drive shaft and disposed in a triangle shape in plan view.

Further, in the transmission of the outboard motor of the present invention, the dog clutch mechanism of the transmission is structured to switch between a high shift speed and a low shift speed by a dog clutch thereof sliding up and down, and a lower engagement position of the dog clutch is set to the low shift speed.

Further, in the transmission of the outboard motor of the present invention, the hydraulic drive device has an electric hydraulic pump, and component members including the hydraulic pump and an electromagnetic changeover valve excluding the hydraulic cylinder are disposed on a hull side outside the outboard motor.

Further, in the transmission of the outboard motor of the present invention, the dog clutch mechanism of the transmission is structured such that a dog clutch thereof moves to an upper engagement position and a lower engagement position via a slide yoke, and a detent device is provided which retains a moving position of at least the slide yoke to the upper engagement position.

Further, in the transmission of the outboard motor of the present invention, each gear constituting the gear train is constituted of a helical gear; and a twist angle of the helical gear is set so that thrust reactive forces operating on gears meshing between the drive shaft input shaft and the counter shaft and on gears meshing between the drive shaft output shaft and the counter shaft counter each other.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a rear perspective view illustrating an outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a left side view of a boat on which the outboard motor according to the present invention is mounted;

FIG. **3** is a left side view illustrating a schematic structural example of the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a disposition structure example of a transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **5** is an exploded perspective view illustrating cases of the transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **6** is a cutaway perspective view illustrating the transmission disposed and structured in a mid unit in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **7** is a transverse cross-sectional view of a transmission chamber in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **8** is a cutaway perspective view of the transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **9** is a vertical cross-sectional view of the transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **10** is a vertical cross-sectional view of the transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention;

FIG. **11** is a cross-sectional view along a line I-I of FIG. **9**;

FIG. **12** is a cross-sectional view along a line II-II of FIG. **9**;

FIG. **13** is a cross-sectional view along a line III-III of FIG. **9**; and

FIG. **14** is a block diagram illustrating a structural example of the transmission in the outboard motor according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Hereinafter, a preferred embodiment of a transmission of an outboard motor according to the present invention will be described with reference to drawings.

FIG. **1** is a rear perspective view illustrating a partially cutaway exterior of an outboard motor **10** according to the present invention. The outboard motor **10** is mounted in a rear part of the hull of a boat **1** as illustrated in FIG. **2**, and in this case, at its front side, it is fixed to a stern board P of the hull of the boat **1** as illustrated in FIG. **3**. Note that FIG. **3** is a left side view illustrating a schematic structural example of the outboard motor **10**, and in the following description, in each drawing as necessary, the front side of the outboard motor **10** is denoted by an arrow Fr and the rear side is denoted by an arrow Rr, and further the lateral right side of the outboard motor **10** is denoted by an arrow R and the lateral left side is denoted by an arrow L.

First, the overall basic structure of the outboard motor **10** will be described. In FIG. **1** and particularly FIG. **3**, an engine unit or a power unit **11**, a mid unit **12**, and a lower unit **13** are disposed in order from an upper part to a lower part, and these units are structured to be integrally coupled. In the engine unit **11**, the engine **14** is mounted and supported vertically so that a crank shaft **15** is directed toward a vertical direction via an engine base or an engine holder. Note that as the engine **14**, for example, a V-multiple cylinder engine or the like is chosen. Although the vicinity of the engine unit **11** and the mid unit **12** is covered with an exterior cover as illustrated in FIG. **1**, FIG. **1** illustrates a state that part of the exterior cover of the mid unit **12** is virtually cutaway, and a drive shaft which will be described later is disposed in a drive shaft housing **16** which is schematically illustrated. Note that the engine **14** is mounted in an upper part of the drive shaft housing **16**.

The mid unit **12** is supported integrally pivotally about a support shaft **19** (steering shaft) set to a swivel bracket **18** via an upper mount **17**A and a lower mount **17**B. A clamp bracket **20** is provided on both left and right sides of the swivel bracket **18**, and it is fixed to the stern board P of the hull via this clamp bracket **20**. The swivel bracket **18** is supported pivotally in a vertical direction about a support shaft **21** (tilt shaft) set in a left and right horizontal direction.

In the mid unit **12**, a drive shaft **22** coupled to a lower end of the crank shaft **15** is disposed to penetrate in a vertical direction, and a driving force of this drive shaft **22** is transmitted to a propeller shaft which will be described later in a gear case of the lower unit **13**. On a front side of the drive shaft **22**, a shift rod **23** for switching forward and reverse, or the like is disposed in parallel in the vertical direction. The mid unit **12** has a drive shaft housing **16** which houses the drive shaft **22**.

The lower unit **13** has a gear case **25** including a plurality of gears and so on for rotary driving a propeller **24** by the driving force of the drive shaft **22**. The drive shaft **22** extending out downward from the mid unit **12** finally rotates the propeller **24** by meshing of a gear attached to it with a gear in the gear case **25**, where a motive power transmission path in the gear device in the gear case **25** is switched, that is, shifted by operation of the shift rod **23**. Further, an integrally formed casing **26** has an anti-splash plate **27** and an anti-cavitation plate **28**, which are disposed vertically in the vicinity of a coupling surface with the mid unit **12**, and on a lower part of the casing **26** extending downward from them, the gear case **25** disposed to exhibit a bullet shape or an artillery shell shape in a forward and backward direction is disposed.

The shift rod **23** is vertically inserted and supported in a tip side of the artillery shell shape of the gear case **25** in the casing **26**. The shift rod **23** is suspended down to the position where it crosses an axial extension line of the propeller shaft **29**. Further, in the vicinity of a substantially center in the forward and backward direction of the casing **26**, the drive shaft **22** is inserted and supported. In the gear case **25**, the propeller shaft **29** is disposed along the forward and backward direction and is rotatably supported via a plurality of bearings. On a lower end of the drive shaft **22**, a drive gear **30** is attached, and on the propeller shaft **29**, a front and rear pair of a forward gear **31** and a reverse gear **32** meshing with the drive gear **30** are each supported rotatably.

By a shift operation via the shift rod **23**, a motive power transmission path from a forward gear **31** or reverse gear **32** to the propeller shaft **29** is formed. By start of the engine **14**, output torque thereof is transmitted from the drive shaft **22** to a propelling device. That is, the outboard motor **10** generates a propulsive force by rotation of the propeller shaft **29** and the propeller **24** via the forward gear **31** or the reverse gear **32**, and therefore the boat **1** in which it is mounted goes forward or backward.

In the outboard motor **10** having the above-described basic structure, in the mid unit **12** as illustrated in FIG. **4**, the drive shaft **22** coupled to the lower end of the crank shaft **15** is disposed to penetrate in the vertical direction, and this drive shaft **22** is further coupled to the propeller shaft **29** in the gear case **25** of the lower unit **13**. Particularly in the present invention, as in FIG. **4**, the drive shaft **22** is separated vertically into a drive shaft input shaft **22**A coupled to the crank shaft **15** and a drive shaft output shaft **22**B driving the propeller **24**. A gear type transmission **33** capable of switching between at least two high and low speed ratios is interposed between the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B.

Below the drive shaft housing **16** in the mid unit **12**, an upper case **34** and a lower case **35** for forming a transmission chamber **37**, which will be described later, of the transmission **33** are integrally coupled to each other. The upper case **34** is coupled to the drive shaft housing **16**, and the lower case **35** is coupled to the lower unit **13**. FIG. **5** illustrates a specific structural example of the upper case **34** and the lower case **35**, and the both cases are stacked vertically and have mainly in a front half part of the upper case **34** a space for forming the transmission chamber **37** of the transmission **33**. Note that in a rear half part of the upper case **34** and the lower case **35**, there is formed an exhaust passage **36** for allowing exhaust gas discharged from the engine **14** disposed above to flow to the lower unit **13** side below and be discharged. Here, the upper case **34** and the lower case **35** are formed separately from the drive shaft housing **16** but substantially function as part of the drive shaft housing **16**, and therefore the transmission **33** itself may also be disposed and structured in the drive shaft housing **16**.

FIG. **6** is a cutaway perspective view illustrating the transmission **33** constituted in the upper case **34** and the lower case **35** by removing an exterior cover around the mid unit **12**. As described above, in the upper case **34** and the lower case **35** coupled integrally, the transmission chamber **37** of the transmission **33** is formed, and in this transmission chamber **37**, a plurality of component members of the transmission **33** are housed and disposed. The inside of the transmission chamber **37** is of a liquid-tight structure. FIG. **7** illustrates a side cross section of the transmission chamber **37**, the transmission chamber **37** is disposed in the front half part of the upper case **34**, and the exhaust passage **36** is formed in the rear half part thereof.

The transmission **33** will be further described specifically using FIG. **8** and so on. The transmission **33** is housed in the transmission chamber **37** and includes a counter shaft **38** disposed in parallel with the drive shaft **22**, a gear train **39** bridged between each of the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B of the drive shaft **22** and the counter shaft **38**, and a dog clutch mechanism **40** capable of selectively switching a high shift speed and a low shift speed.

Particularly, a drive device **63** which will be described later driving the dog clutch mechanism **40** is constituted of a hydraulic drive device driven by a hydraulic cylinder, and this hydraulic cylinder is disposed in the transmission chamber **37**.

With further reference to FIG. **9**, the drive shaft input shaft **22**A is inserted from above into a substantially center part in a left and right direction near a front side of the transmission chamber **37**, and supported rotatably at its lower end on the upper case **34** indirectly via a bearing **41** (which means a tapered roller bearing unless otherwise mentioned). At a position immediately below the drive shaft input shaft **22**A, the drive shaft output shaft **22**B is supported rotatably at its upper end on the lower case **35** indirectly via a bearing **42**. Further, the counter shaft **38** is supported rotatably at its upper and lower ends on the upper case **34** and the lower case **35**, respectively, via bearings **43**, **44**.

The gear train **39** includes a main drive gear **45** provided integrally rotatably on the drive shaft input shaft **22**A, a main driven gear **46** axially supported rotatably on the drive shaft output shaft **22**B, a counter driven gear **47** meshing with the main drive gear **45** and provided integrally rotatably on the counter shaft **38**, and a counter drive gear **48** provided integrally rotatably on the counter shaft **38** and meshing with the main driven gear **46**.

A spline (male) **49** formed in the lower end of the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and a spline (female) **50** formed in a boss part of the main drive gear **45** engage with each other, by which the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the main drive gear **45** are coupled integrally rotatably. Further, a spacer **51** is interposed between the counter driven gear **47** and the counter drive gear **48**, restricting an interval between both the gears, that is, a vertical direction position. Splines (male) **52** are formed in the portions corresponding to the counter driven gear **47** and the counter drive gear **48** of the counter shaft **38**, splines (female) **53**, **54** are formed in the counter driven gear **47** and the counter drive gear **48**, respectively, and these splines **52** and **53**, **54** engage with each other, by which the counter shaft **38** and the counter driven gear **47** or the counter drive gear **48** are coupled integrally rotatably. Accordingly, the gear train **39** constituted of the main drive gear **45**, the counter driven gear **47**, the counter drive gear **48**, and the main driven gear **46** is retained in a constantly connected state.

A hollow idle shaft **55** is externally fitted to the upper end of the drive shaft output shaft **22**B, and in this case a spline (male) **56** formed in the drive shaft output shaft **22**B and a spline (female) **57** formed in the idle shaft **55** engage with each other, by which the drive shaft output shaft **22**B and the idle shaft **55** are coupled integrally rotatably. Further, a bearing (needle bearing) **59** is fitted between an inner sleeve **58** externally fitted to the idle shaft **55** and the main driven gear **46**, and the main driven gear **46** is rotatable in relation with the drive shaft output shaft **22**B.

Each gear of the gear train **39** is constituted of a helical gear. In this case, a helix angle of the helical gear is set so that a thrust reactive force operating on the mutually engaged main drive gear **45** and counter driven gear **47** and a thrust reactive force operating on the mutually engaged main driven gear **46** and counter drive gear **48** counter each other.

Further, given that a gear ratio between the main drive gear **45** and the counter driven gear **47** is Gr_1 and a gear ratio between the main driven gear **46** and the counter drive gear **48** is Gr_2, the speed reducing ratio R in the entire gear train **39** is $Gr_1 \times Gr_2$.

The dog clutch mechanism **40** has a dog clutch **60** externally fitted with the idle shaft **55** and supported vertically reciprocatably along an axial direction of the idle shaft **55** between the main drive gear **45** and the main driven gear **46**.

A spline (male) **61** formed in the idle shaft **55** and a spline (female) **62** formed in the dog clutch **60** engage with each other, by which the idle shaft **55** and the dog clutch **60** are coupled integrally rotatably. As described above, the drive shaft output shaft **22**B and the idle shaft **55** are coupled integrally rotatably, and therefore the three parts of the dog clutch **60**, the idle shaft **55**, and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B couple integrally rotatably.

A drive device vertically moving the dog clutch **60**, which will be described later, moves upward to engage with the main drive gear **45** (upper engagement position) and moves downward to engage with the main driven gear **46** (lower engagement position). Then, the transmission **33** is structured to switch between a high shift speed and a low shift speed by the dog clutch **60** sliding up and down, and a lower engagement position of the dog clutch **60** is set to the low shift speed. In FIG. **9**, a neutral position of the dog clutch **60** is illustrated, from which the dog clutch **60** engages with the main drive gear **45** by moving upward, and in this case, the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B are directly coupled via the main drive gear **45** and the dog clutch **60**. Further, by the dog clutch **60** moving downward, the dog clutch **60** engages with the main driven gear **46**, and in this case, the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B are connected at the speed reducing ratio R via the motive power transmission path formed through the main drive gear **45**, the counter driven gear **47**, the counter drive gear **48**, and the main driven gear **46**.

The drive device **63** of the transmission **33** is constituted of a hydraulic drive device driven by a hydraulic cylinder. This hydraulic drive device includes an electric hydraulic pump, and the hydraulic cylinder is actuated by hydraulic pressure generated by this hydraulic pump. As illustrated in FIG. **10**, the drive device has a hydraulic cylinder **64** whose cylinder axis is set in the vertical direction, and in this example, a cylinder body of the hydraulic cylinder **64** is fixedly supported to a ceiling part **37***a* of the transmission chamber **37**. The hydraulic cylinder **64** and the dog clutch **60** are coupled via a slide yoke **65** disposed between them. In this case, the slide yoke **65** is supported vertically slidably along a guide shaft **66** suspended in the transmission chamber **37**, and one end side is coupled to an output rod **64***a* of the hydraulic cylinder **64**. Thus, the slide yoke **65** is moved up and down by the hydraulic cylinder **64**.

Further, a shift fork **67** is attached to the other end side of the slide yoke **65**, and this shift fork **67** extends out to the dog clutch **60** side to engage therewith. Specifically, the dog clutch **60** exhibits a substantially circular shape in plan view as illustrated in FIG. **11** and so on, and a flange part **60***a* is provided to project along an outer peripheral edge thereof as in FIG. **10** and FIG. **11**. The shift fork **67** exhibits an arc shape in a plan view as illustrated in FIG. **11**, and engages with the flange part **60***a* so as to sandwich it from both upper and lower sides (FIG. **10**).

Here, as illustrated in FIG. **11** or FIG. **12**, the drive shaft **22** (the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B) is disposed in a center portion in the left and right direction of a forefront part of the transmission chamber **37**. Further, the counter shaft **38** and the hydraulic cylinder **64** are offset to left and right, respectively, behind the drive shaft **22** and disposed in a triangle shape in plan view. That is, the three parts of the drive shaft **22**, the counter shaft **38**, and the hydraulic cylinder **64** are in a disposition relation not aligning straight in the forward and backward direction or the left and right direction.

A hydraulic piping **68** is connected to the hydraulic cylinder **64** as in FIG. **6**, and pressure oil flows into or out of the hydraulic cylinder **64** via the hydraulic piping **68**. The hydraulic piping **68** in the immediate vicinity of the hydraulic cylinder **64** is housed in the exterior cover, but an electric hydraulic pump, an electromagnetic changeover valve, and the like excluding the hydraulic cylinder **64** in the drive device **63** of the transmission **33** are disposed outside the outboard motor **10**, that is, on the hull side of the boat **1**. In this case, the hydraulic piping **68** and the hydraulic pump on the hull side are connected via hydraulic hoses **69** illustrated in FIG. **1**.

In the transmission **33**, a detent device **70** can be provided which retains the moving position of at least the slide yoke **65** to an upper engagement position of the dog clutch **60**, as illustrated in FIG. **13**. With reference also to FIG. **10** (seen from arrow A), the detent device **70** has a detent holder **71** fixed to a wall side of the upper case **34** and provided to project to the slide yoke **65** side, and a ball **72** attached to this detent holder **71** is in resilient contact with an outside surface of the slide yoke **65** by resilience of a spring **73**. Note that this detent device **70** can be provided selectively as necessary.

FIG. **14** illustrates an overall structural example of the drive device **63**. In the hydraulic system including the hydraulic cylinder **64**, a hydraulic pump **74** driven by an electric motor **74**A, a regulator **75** performing hydraulic adjustment, a one-way valve **76**, a filter **77**, an accumulator **78**, a solenoid valve **79**, a hydraulic sensor **80**, and a reservoir tank **81** are connected as illustrated via a hydraulic piping **82**. These component members are mounted on the hull side, and the solenoid valve **79** and the hydraulic cylinder **64** are connected via the hydraulic hose **69** as described above. The solenoid valve **79** and so on are actuated and controlled by an ECU (Engine Control Unit) **2** provided on the hull side. A stroke sensor **83** is attached to the hydraulic cylinder **64**, this stroke sensor **83** detects at least an operating stroke end of the hydraulic cylinder **64**, and a detection signal thereof is sent to the ECU **2**. Note that as illustrated in FIG. **1**, a steering device **3**, a remote control device **4**, and so on are disposed on an operator's seat of the boat **1**, and according to operations of them, the drive device **63** is controlled via the ECU **2**.

Next, characteristic operation and effect of the transmission **33** in the outboard motor **10** of the present invention will be described. First, in the basic operation of the transmission **33** of the above-described structure, the dog clutch **60** is moved upward from the neutral position of FIG. **9** by, for example, the shift fork **67** via the slide yoke **65** by actuating the hydraulic cylinder **64**. In this case, the dog clutch **60** is engaged with the main drive gear **45**, the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B are directly coupled via the main drive gear **45** and the dog clutch **60**, and the transmission **33** shifts to the high shift speed. On the other hand, when the solenoid valve **79** is switched to actuate the hydraulic cylinder **64** in a direction reverse to the above described direction, the dog clutch **60** moves downward from the neutral position of FIG. **9**. In this case, the drive shaft input shaft **22**A and the drive shaft output shaft **22**B are connected at the speed reducing ratio R via the gear train **39**. By thus sliding the dog clutch **60** up and down in the transmission **33**, it is possible to appropriately slide to the high shift speed and the low shift speed.

In the present invention, in particular, with the drive device **63** of the dog clutch **60** being constituted of the hydraulic drive device driven by the hydraulic cylinder **64**, control of shifting in the transmission **33** can be performed easily. Note that by providing the transmission **33** in middle of the drive shaft **22**, power performance, fuel consumption performance, and the like can be improved. Further, since the hydraulic cylinder **64** is disposed in the transmission chamber **37**, there is no concern that the hydraulic cylinder **64** is exposed to sea water, and thus durability of the device can be improved largely.

Further, in the transmission **33** illustrated in FIG. **11** or the like, the drive shaft **22** is disposed in the center portion in the left and right direction of the forefront part of the transmission chamber **37**, and the counter shaft **38** and the hydraulic cylinder **64** are offset to left and right, respectively, behind the drive shaft **22** and disposed in a triangle shape.

Being in the above-described disposition relation, the drive shaft **22** of the outboard motor **10** is provided close to the support shaft **19** as a steering shaft pivoting the outboard motor **10** left and right (see FIG. **3**), and by disposing these three in triangle as described above, the drive shaft housing **16** in which the drive shaft **22** is housed can be formed compactly. Further, since the drive shaft housing **16** and the steering shaft can be disposed more closely, inertial moment of the outboard motor **10** decreases, and a maximum steerable angle thereof can be secured largely, thereby improving controllability of the boat **1**.

Further, the dog clutch mechanism **40** of the transmission **33** is structured to switch between a high shift speed and a low shift speed by the dog clutch **60** sliding up and down, and a lower engagement position of the dog clutch **60** is set to the low shift speed.

The dog clutch **60** of the transmission **33** slides in the vertical direction on the shaft of the transmission **33** extending in the vertical direction. The hydraulic cylinder **64** driving this dog clutch **60** decreases in hydraulic pressure when the outboard motor **10** stops. To the hydraulic cylinder **64** decreased in hydraulic pressure, the weight of the dog clutch mechanism **40** or the like operates and the dog clutch **60** moves downward. In such cases, when the lower engagement position of the dog clutch **60** is set to the low shift speed, it is already moved to the low shift speed when the outboard motor **10** is started again, and hence it is not necessary to check the shift position of the transmission **33** every time it is started, which excels in usability and handleability, and the like.

Further, the hydraulic drive device has the electric hydraulic pump **74**, and the electric hydraulic pump **64**, an electromagnetic changeover valve, and so on excluding the hydraulic cylinder **64** are disposed on the hull side outside the outboard motor **10**.

With respect to these component members, it is not necessary to provide a mounting place inside the outboard motor **10**, and thus the outboard motor **10** can be structured compactly.

Further, in the dog clutch mechanism **40** of the transmission **33**, in the structure in which the dog clutch **60** moves to the upper engagement position and the lower engagement position via the slide yoke **65**, the detent device **70** can be disposed which retains the moving position of at least the slide yoke **65** to the upper engagement position.

Since the slide yoke **65** of the dog clutch mechanism **40** is retained to the engagement position of the dog clutch **60** with the detent device **70**, it is unnecessary to constantly apply hydraulic pressure to the hydraulic cylinder **64**, and the operating frequency of the hydraulic pump **74** can be made small. This consequently improves fuel consumption of the outboard motor **10**.

Further, each gear of the gear train **39** is constituted of a helical gear, where the twist angle of the helical gear is set so that a thrust reactive force operating on the mutually engaged main drive gear **45** and counter driven gear **47** and a thrust reactive force operating on the mutually engaged main driven gear **46** and counter drive gear **48** counter each other.

A thrust load operating on the counter shaft **38** is canceled out, and thus it is not necessary to provide thrust bearing means on the bearing rotatably supporting the counter shaft **38**. This simplifies the bearing device, and friction resistance of the bearing due to the thrust load decreases, thereby improving fuel consumption efficiency of the outboard motor **10**.

In the foregoing, the present invention has been described together with various embodiments, but the present invention is not limited only to these embodiments. Changes and the like can be made within the range of the present invention.

In the above-described embodiments, an example of forming the detent device **70** retaining the slide yoke **65** to the upper engagement position is described, but it is also possible to dispose a similarly structured detent device to the lower engagement position.

According to the present invention, since the drive device of the dog clutch is constituted of the hydraulic drive device, control of shifting in the transmission can be performed easily. Further, since the hydraulic cylinder is disposed in the transmission chamber, there is no concern that the hydraulic cylinder is exposed to sea water, and thus durability of the device can be improved largely.

Further, by devising the disposition relation of the drive shaft, the counter shaft, and the hydraulic cylinder in the transmission chamber, the drive shaft housing can be formed compactly. Moreover, corresponding to this, inertial moment of the outboard motor decreases, and the maximum steerable angle can be secured largely, resulting in effects such as improving controllability of the boat thereby.

It should be noted that the above embodiments merely illustrate concrete examples of implementing the present invention, and the technical scope of the present invention is not to be construed in a restrictive manner by these embodiments. That is, the present invention may be implemented in various forms without departing from the technical spirit or main features thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A transmission of an outboard motor in which a crank shaft extending in a vertical direction of an engine mounted on an upper side is coupled to a drive shaft, a gear transmission capable of switching between at least two high and low speed ratios is interposed between a drive shaft input shaft coupled to the crank shaft and a drive shaft output shaft driving a propeller, which are separated into an upper part and a lower part of the drive shaft, wherein:

the transmission is housed in a transmission chamber formed in a drive shaft housing and comprises the drive shaft, a counter shaft disposed in parallel with the drive shaft, a gear train bridged between each of the drive shaft input shaft and output shaft and the counter shaft, and a dog clutch mechanism selectively switching a high shift speed and a low shift speed;

the transmission comprises a drive device driving the dog clutch mechanism constituted of a hydraulic drive device driven by a hydraulic cylinder, the hydraulic cylinder being disposed in the transmission chamber; and

the drive shaft is disposed in a center portion in a left and right direction of a forefront part of the transmission chamber, and the counter shaft and the hydraulic cylinder are offset to left and right, respectively, behind the drive shaft and disposed in a triangle shape in a plan view.

2. The transmission of the outboard motor according to claim **1**, wherein the dog clutch mechanism of the transmission is structured to switch between the high shift speed and the low shift speed by a dog clutch thereof sliding up and down, and a lower engagement position of the dog clutch is set to the low shift speed.

3. The transmission of the outboard motor according to claim **1**, wherein the hydraulic drive device has an electric hydraulic pump, and component members including the hydraulic pump and an electromagnetic changeover valve excluding the hydraulic cylinder are disposed on a hull side outside the outboard motor.

4. The transmission of the outboard motor according to claim **1**, wherein the dog clutch mechanism of the transmission is structured such that a dog clutch thereof moves to an upper engagement position and a lower engagement position via a slide yoke, and a detent device is provided which retains a moving position of at least the slide yoke to the upper engagement position.

5. The transmission of the outboard motor according to claim **1**, wherein:

each gear constituting the gear train is constituted of a helical gear; and

a twist angle of the helical gear is set so that thrust reactive forces operating on gears meshing between the drive shaft input shaft and the counter shaft and on gears meshing between the drive shaft output shaft and the counter shaft counter each other.

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